

Stomp Dance

by Nerdellelect

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Summary: The first time Captain Jasper Whitlock meets the woman that will become the love of his life, he's staring down the wrong end of an 1859 Burnside carbine with a bullet wound in his thigh and a headache the size of Texas. [Jasper/OC]

Stomp Dance

****DISCLAIMER REGARDING THE RACISM/SEXISM/ETC. IN THIS FIC:****

The racist or sexist views expressed by some characters in this fic are not my views. I am trying to create a realistic storyline and unfortunately, these views were common in the past, especially in the era in which this story takes place. If you don't like a racist or sexist Jasper, then don't worry! The outdated opinions of both my Jasper _and_ Nashoba (my OC) will change over time. I believe that a big part of falling in love is getting to know each other and growing from that knowledge; it is a journey that results in self-reflection and change, and _Stomp Dance_ is Jasper and Nashoba's journey.

****A/N: ****

This fic came about due to a very, very extensive perusal of FF's Jasper/any-female-character-ever archives; a sudden need to write fanfiction again after a 10 year hiatus from the genre; and the complete lack of racial diversity in Stephenie Meyer's original vampires (RIP Toshiro).

Also, for those of you who are interested, _Stomp Dance_ will have a kind of one-shot / companion piece series called _Garfish Dance_ that follows Jasper and Nashoba throughout some of the most notable scenes of the _Twilight_ series so if you like this fic you might like to check that one out too.

* * *

July 1st, 1862 - Outskirts of Indian Territory

Now, the important portion of the previous sentenceâ€”besides "Burnside carbine" and "bullet wound" of courseâ€”is the "will become" part because both "will" and "become" imply that the following phrase, namely "love of his life," is a conditional state of being that requires the passage of time to become true. Time that, if the gun in his face is any indication, he does not currently have.

He gets the feeling that she is very, very used to being obeyed, but as much as Jasper would love to join the, assuredly large, ranks of those who have followed her orders without question, he is woefully lacking in any knowledge pertaining to Indian languages. When she jabs her gun threateningly in his direction again, however, he figures he better come up with something before she decides that his body should join the five other men he'd seen her and her men put down before she got around to questioning him.

He hopes it isn't because there weren't any of his men left to execute.

He knows he and his men were ambushed somewhere on the border between Indian Territory and the top-most portion of Texas but with the chaos left over from 1854** (1)** and the tension caused by the aggression of the North she could be from almost any number of tribes. They're dressed in traditional western clothingâ€”although she's dressed like a man_, Jasper thinks, eyeing the woman's trouser-clad legs and buttoned vest with something close to aweâ€”so he assumes they've at least had some contact with white traders. Fortunately for him, at least some of those traders are likely to be from Mexico.

Well, he did say _likely_.

"Do you speak English?" He asks, getting rather desperate. His tone is relatively polite given the circumstances, but his thoughts would be considered rather rude in certain upper-class circles of society. In fact, right at this moment Jasper is trying to think of a way to

murder the woman in front of him along with the rest of her men. If he moves very quickly and is very lucky, he might even succeed in taking her hostage and eliminate the need to kill her men all together.

"Ah! Naahollimanompa! Akostinichili." She exclaims in a tone that at least sounds understanding. She also lowers her gun, and Jasper's eyes follow the barrel as it is finally, finally removed from his forehead. Unfortunately, it is now aimed squarely at his crotch.

You win some, you lose some.

"You speak English." She says, her accent taking on a distinctive northern lilt. "I had assumed you were an agent." ***(2)***

"Yes! Yes, I speak English." He says, hastily tacking on a "Friendly! I'm friendly!" at the end for good measure. He doesn't know if he and his men are actually friendlyâ€"it depends on which tribe she and her men are fromâ€"but he figures it can't hurt to garner a little good will from a woman holding a gun to his manhood.

"We will see about that." She frowns at him. "Why do you fight the Comanche?"

Shit.

The Comancheâ€"

Ah fuck. No wonder the fucks attacked usâ€"nothin' but sneak-thieves and warmongers. Get shot in the leg and then this shitâ€"might as well scalp my fuckin' self and be done with it._

â€"are no friends of the Confederacy. She and her men are no allies of the Comanche, the five dead Indians at his side prove that much, but that doesn't mean they have any tender feeling towards the Confederacy either.

One of the men at her side glares at him and leans over to whisperâ€"_as if I could fuckin' understand a word you're saying, asshole_â€"angrily into his interrogator's ear. He looks fierce, and the scar on the left side of his face that pulls his bottom lip into a permanent scowl only serves to heighten the air of danger surrounding him. Whatever the scared man says only seems to piss the woman off and with an angry shout that sounds something like "Hika!" or maybe "Hiccup!" she dismisses him in favor of raising her carbine back to its former place between Jasper's eyes.

"Are you a friend of the Union?" She snarls questioningly, her dark brows drawn together. "Ofi' alhlhi anoli!"

"No! No!" He yells, holding his hands up in a gesture of surrender. It's a total fuckin' guess as to whether or not he's just fucked himself but it's the best he can come up with a gun in his face and a bullet hole in his leg. To be honest, this whole conversation has gone on a lot longer than he'd expected it to. At the beginning of this whole mess, when he was shot and then unceremoniously dragged from his horse by the angry woman currently holding a gun to his head, he thought he would either be dead in the dirt or passed out from blood loss by this point.

"Good." The word is said very slowly, drawn out of her mouth at the same measured pace that she lowers her gun. It is now pointed firmly at the red, heat-baked dirt and his heart feels like it could beat right out of his chest.

"You are coming with us," she continues, gesturing to his leg with a hand dyed in the blood of the five dead Indiansâ€”_Comanche_, he silently corrects himself, _they were Comanche_â€”to his right. "You need to have that wound looked at."

"Yes." He agrees tiredly because as much as he would love to throw himself across the saddle of the closest horse and ride until he either passes out or dies, the pool of blood leaking from his thigh has reached a worrying size and his hands, which had seemed so steady when he'd held them up in supplication only a moments ago, have grown cold and tingly where they rest in the prairie grass at his sides.

His interrogator frowns at his lack of enthusiasm before she finally seems to notice the growing patch of red that surrounds his thigh. She clicks her tongue at him, giving Jasper the distinct impression that she believes he's bleeding just to inconvenience her, before turning to the scarred man at her right.

"Inukfi," she says, sweeping her hand in Jasper's direction, "yappa chofalli. Ishtachapanna."

The man grunts before turning towards Jasper with a scowl on his face. "Wait, wait," Jasper says, flopping his arm up in what was meant to be a gesture of pause but comes out looking more like a sloppy swat at a particularly annoying horse-fly. Surprisingly, the man stops.

"My menâ€”what about my men?" He asks, almost desperate. If they are injured then they will require the same care he assumes he himself will receive; if they are not, then perhaps he can persuade the woman to let them return to Captain Cooper's regiment. *(3) **

The woman, who had been in the process of mounting a particularly beautiful Paint, pauses and glances over her shoulder at him. He is unable to properly name the emotion he sees in her eyes at that moment, but it's so close sympathy that he already knows what she's going to say before she opens her mouth.

"They are dead." The woman says bluntly, although not unkindly. "You are the only one left alive. I am sorry."

His foreknowledge does nothing to blunt the blow and the air leaves his lungs in a harsh, wounded sound as he slumps completely into the dry red dirt to stare up at the unforgiving July sun. There is a ringing in his ears that seems to gain volume with every beat of his heart and a creeping coldness traveling from his leg to the top of his head andâ€”

Ohâ€”|

And there is only blackness.

* * *

><p>July 1st, 1862 " Earlier that same day

Captain Jasper Whitlock of the Texas Regiment of the Confederate Army would give anything to be back in Texas.

The gentle sway of the Pinto beneath him has become almost irritating in its regularity. It is an unfamiliar feeling, the smoothness of his horse's gait, and he aches for the rough, stilted canter required for riding across the rocky soil of his own country. Unlike his beloved Texas, with her gentle slopes and rising plateaus, Indian Territory is a flat, desolate land, an endless prairie of brown and green interrupted by a rare splash of red or blue. His only comfort, if you can call it that, is the familiar feeling of the unforgiving sun beating down upon his back and the dry, dust-filled air that seeps into his lungs.

"Hey, Captain!" A man shouts to his right, breaking Jasper out of his reverie. "Time to take the wool out of ye eyes, we're comin' up on the border"ain't got no time for ye ta be day dreamin'!"

Jasper frowns, turning to look at the man from under the flat brim of his hat. "I ain't day dreamin' McMann," he calls back in irritation, "and I suggest you watch your tone or you'll be walkin' back to San Antonio."

McMann laughs, a wry smile pulling on his sun-chapped lips. He is an awkward looking man, if Jasper is to be honest, what with his wild red curls and rosy cheeks. They make him look as if he is always three sheets to the wind; which, knowing McMann, he probably is.

"Cap, the last time ye tried to make me walk I was ridin' again before noon."

"That's because your complainin' was more a punishment for us than the walkin' was for you," another man, Stephens, butts in. "Jabbered on worse than a woman at a Sunday social."

"Och, I don't hear ye complainin' about me jabberin' when you're belly laughin' at me jokes," McMann replies cheekily. "Besides, me voice is damn delight"like the tinkle of a church bell." He tips his hat with a wink.

"A damned delight more like," grumbles the other man, rolling his eyes at the red head's familiar antics, "like the bayin' of a hell-hound."

"Alright, alright, you're both pretty, ladies," Jasper interrupts, removing his hat to wipe the sweat from his forehead on the sleeve of his uniform. And here he had been thinkin' of the sun as a comfort, what a joke. "As much as I hate to admit it, McMann's right, this ain't no place to be pussy-footin' around." He replaces his hat and pulls his horse a stop, turning in his saddle to look at his companions.

Seven trail-weary men stare back at him from their respective horses, eyes narrowed by the sun and skin pinkened by the dry, clinging heat. They have been riding since the break of day, but they will travel many miles more before stopping for the night. Although their mission is not particularly time sensitive"the Union has little interest in

the wilds of Indian Territory and any information they've been able to gain is of little import to the Confederacy"he knows that his men hanker for a the antiquated foreignness of San Antonio. If they continue at their current pace, they will reach their destination in little under four days.

"The Indians?" A young black-haired boy, Jamison, asks nervously, his eyes darting around the open countryside as if one might jump out from behind a rock at any moment. _He looks younger than me_, Jasper thinks, eyeing the boy with a frown _does the army even care how old they are now? _

"Nay, the French," McMann says seriously. "They'll pull ye off yer horse and make ye eat es-car-got."

Jamison makes a face. "Snails?"

"Ta really slimy buggers," intones McMann gravely, removing his hat and placing it ceremoniously over his heart, mourning for those lost to the terrors of French cuisine.

"Yes, Indians." Jasper says seriously, shooting McMann a glance"he has the decency to look at least a _little_ sheepish as he replaces his hat"before continuing. "A lot of folks go missin' on the border, so I want all of you to keep an eye out. Ain't no since in being caught off guard if we don't have to be."

"Yes, sir!" Comes the collective cry, although one sounds a little less serious than the others. _Fuckin' McMann,_ Jasper thinks wearily, _I swear that man would back-talk the Devil himself if he ever got the chance._

Jasper clicks his tongue and taps the flanks of his horse with his spur-heeled boots to bring her into an easy gallop. Hearing the sound of hooves behind him, he glances over his shoulder to check the formation of his men and he can't stop his eyes from drifting to the redheaded man that follows a few paces behind him. For all his joking and carrying on, McMann is a good soldier. He knows when to follow orders and when to question them; when to tell a joke to ease the nerves of the newer recruits and when to remain silent; and perhaps most endearingly, when to push the fine line between insubordination and friendship that comes with life in the army.

In San Antonio, when Jasper had walked up to Captain Douglas without so much as a by-your-leave and declared his intentions to serve under him as a member of the Texas regiment of the Confederate Cavalry, McMann had laughed at his place at the stern, grey-haired man's side. A greenhorn he'd called him, nudging an annoyed looking Douglas with a grin. Even then, McMann had found little value in the traditional military chain of command.

"Ye can call yerself a Captain from here to Ballyhooly," *(4)* he would tell Jasper later, "but unless ye earn it, it don't mean shite."

He is Jasper's closest and most trusted friend.

"Hey, Cap! Are ye done admiring me beauty or do ya want me ta' give ya a few?"

He is also the biggest pain in the ass Jasper has ever met.

Jasper grumbles and spurs his horse faster. "Beauty?" He calls, a smirk pulling on his lips. "It's a wonder I can still stand to look at ya! I know the ladies can't!"

"Och, it's nate to be captain or colonel, Devil a bit would want to be higher," McMann sings back obstinately, his voice somehow overcoming the now furious sound of hooves on sunbaked dirt. It is a familiar tune, one Jasper has heard McMann hum many times before, and despite his projected irritation it warms Jasper's heart to hear it once again. "But to rust as a private, I think's an infernal predicament, surely, says Private McMann."** (5)**

Jasper scoffs.

"They can go sparkin' and playin' at billiards, with money to spend for their slightest desire," continues the other man, unhindered by his friend's lack of appreciation. "Loafin' and atin' and drinkin' at Ballard's, while we're on the pickets, says Private McMann."

"I take it back," Stephens yells over McMann's crooning Irish lilt, "you don't sound like a hell-hound McMann, ya sound like a dyin' caâ€" "

There is a crack of a carbine and Stephens' horse _screams_â€"a sound Jasper will remember despite the burning of the changeâ€"before flipping hoof over head in a flurry of dirt and grass. For a few fleeting moments, Jasper thinks he's imagining things, that the hot July sun has gone to his head, but then McMann is yelling "Indians!" in a voice so far removed from his normal jovial tone that it threatens to send shivers down Jasper's spine and he knows, _knows_, that what he's seeing is real and if he doesn't do something soon he and his men are going to die.

"Positions!" He yells, pulling the reins of his horse sharply to the left. "Positions!" His men scramble to do as they're told, trying to make themselves smaller targets while maintaining their speed. McMann yells "Right! To the right!" and Jasper whips his head around to catch the first glimpse of his opponents.

There are ten men on horseback quickly making their way out of a small patch of thicket twenty-five yards ahead of where he and his men now ride. Eight are carrying guns either stolen or traded from the Confederate Army and Jasper can't help but think that it would be extremely ironic to be killed by one of them. As he moves to unholster the revolver on his hip, a sharp crack rips through the air from behind him and he watches in satisfaction as the Indian in front, the one most likely responsible for Stephens' death, falls from his horse, a patch of red blooming brightly on his chest.

McMann always had been a good shot with a Colt.

Jasper's satisfaction at his enemy's death is cut short by a cry of pain to his left, and he glances over just in time to see Jamison hunch over his saddle and clutch a hand to his side. Somehow, the boy manages to fight through the pain and stay on his horseâ€"a small miracleâ€"but Jasper is familiar enough with the pain of a gut-shot to know that Jamison is almost certainly out of the fight. It is now

six verses nine, and the odds are not in the Confederate men's favor.

"There!" He calls, pointing to a small outcrop of sun-bleached stone in the distance. It's the only thing even resembling cover in the flat prairie landscape. "There! Now!"

The men follow the direction of his finger and immediately shift their course towards the collection of rocks, never once deviating from their furious pace. Jasper watches nervously as the Indians seem to recognize his intention to use the outcrop as cover and urge their own horses faster. They are now riding parallel to each other with only twenty to thirty yards separating their two collections of men and horses. It has become a race.

He and his men are bombarded with a small hail of bullets in an attempt to slow them down but, fortunately for them, it is extremely difficult to properly aim a gun while riding a galloping horse, or load the percussion cap needed to fire another shot, ***(6)*** and none of the Indians' bullets hit their mark. The smell of black powder fills the air as Jasper returns fire with his revolver, taking out one man with a lucky shot to his horse's flank and another when he proves too slow to maneuver himself out of the path of his fallen comrade's flailing body.

_Six verses seven, _Jasper thinks with satisfaction.

The rest of the Confederate men's mad scramble for cover is a flurry of gun smokes, dust, and loud, unintelligible shouts of native voices. Later, Jasper will remember it as a series of sensations: the frantic hammering of his heart within his chest; the feel of the smooth, polished wood of his revolver's handle clutched in his sweaty hand; the scratch of the ruff, rain-stiffened leather that makes up his horse's reins as it brushes against his calloused palm; the sudden, almost overwhelming feeling of despair when he realizes that no matter what his actions are in the next few moments, some of his men are going to die as a result, that some of his men _have already_ died.

He had loved them as brothers, and now he would be forced to watch as they were slaughtered for nothing more than being in the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong Captain to watch their backs.

He would give anything to be back in Texas.

* * *

><p>References:

(1)** ***In 1854, the U.S. agreed to acquire lands in Kansas and Nebraska from several tribes in order to avoid and/or alleviate the reservation-settlement problems. This caused a great deal of tribal migration and made it hard to determine tribal affiliations via location, thus Jasper's reference.

(2)* And Indian agent; a person appointed by the government to act as an ambassador between a particular tribe and said government. Obviously, a Chickasaw agent would be expected to know how to speak Chickasaw, hence her confusion at Jasper's his lack of language skills.

(3) **Captain Douglas H. Cooper was the commander of the 1st Choctaw and Chickasaw Mounted Rifles in Indian Territory.**

(4) **A small village in County Cork, Ireland.**

(5) **The song that McMann sings is a humorous take on an actual Civil War era song called "Private Maguire" (my favorite rendition of which is sung by David Kincaid). It is about how enlisted soldiers have a much harder time in the army than officers, making it a particularly cheeky song to sing to Jasper, who as a Captain (and later a Major).**

(6) **When the Burnside's "the carbine used by the "Indians" trigger is pulled, the hammer strikes a percussion cap (a cylinder of copper or brass filled with a small amount of a shock-sensitive explosive material) and causes it to explode, this causes the black powder within the inserted cartridge to spark and the gun to fire. After each shot, the percussion cap and cartridge needs to be replaced a hard thing to do while riding a horse considering the cap is smaller than a thimble therefore making it almost impossible for the "Indians" to fire multiple shots at Jasper's men.**

* * *

<p>Notes on all Chickasaw translations:

All translations are derived from the work of the Chickasaw Nation's language office which happens to be headquartered in my home town. I use both Humes' and Munro-Willmond's spellings interchangeably.

The other sentences in Chickasaw will not be translated in this chapter. Although I do have them (if you really want to know what they said feel free to message me) I feel that it is better to keep you as confused as Jasper for now.

* * *

><p>AN:

Like, review, tell me you hate me just give me some feedback please!

I'm kinda sad to kill off McMann; he was a cheeky little Irish shit. Also, for those of you who are interested, the place Jasper and his men get ambushed is close to modern day Thackerville, Oklahoma.

End
file.